



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

## News Release

VA Providence Healthcare System  
830 Chalkstone Ave  
Providence, RI 02908  
Contact: Winfield S. Danielson III  
401-457-3369  
[winfield.danielsoniii@va.gov](mailto:winfield.danielsoniii@va.gov)

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### **Heart Failure with Reduced Ejection Fraction Treatment Study Funded**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Researchers from VA Providence Healthcare System received funding Jan. 1 to study a treatment for heart failure with reduced ejection fraction.

In heart failure with reduced ejection fraction, known as HFrEF, the heart muscle does not contract effectively, so less oxygen-rich blood is pumped out to the body. The condition is associated with severe impairment of physical and mental health, and carries a high five-year mortality rate of approximately 75 percent.

Lead researcher Dr. Wen-Chih “Hank” Wu, acting chief of the Medicine Service for the VA Providence Healthcare System, and professor of medicine and of epidemiology at Brown University, will research the use of probenecid, a generic, globally available medication for treating gout with minimal side effects, as an outpatient treatment for HFrEF.

“This study is important for Veterans because HFrEF is a common cause for hospital admission and death in the VA Health Care System,” said Wu. “While a lot of progress has been made in understanding how the disease works, there is significant progress still to be made in its management and treatment.”

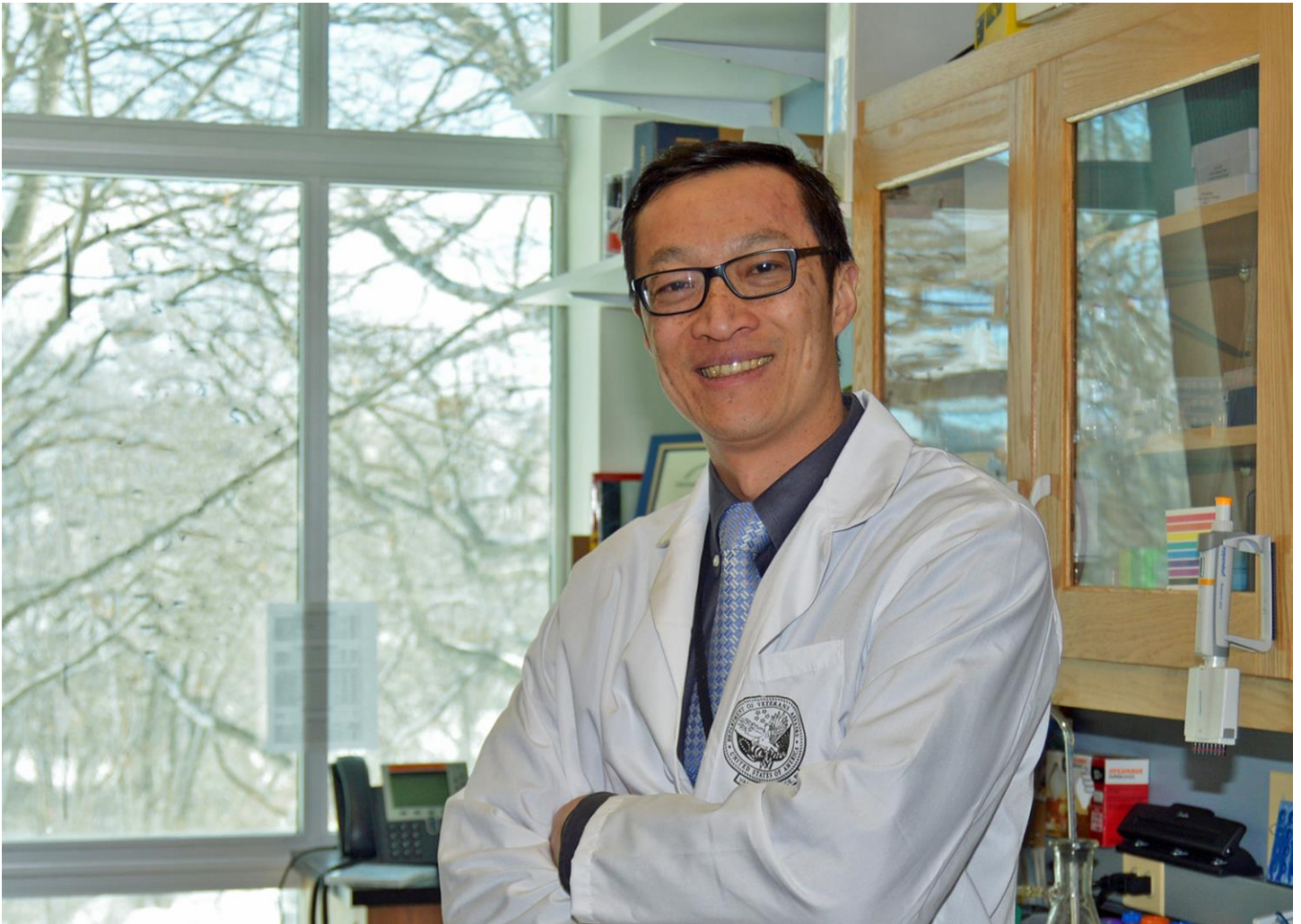
The five-year, \$2.2 million, VA-funded study will recruit 120 patients to assess whether oral probenecid improves heart function, exercise tolerance and quality of life, versus a placebo.

Previous research with probenecid has shown improvement in the heart’s left ventricular function with few adverse effects. The use of probenecid as a treatment for HFrEF was also indirectly supported by a recent retrospective study of approximately 40,000 patients in the Medicare database, which found treatment with probenecid was associated with a nine percent decrease in risk of hospitalization for heart failure.

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## **HFrEF Treatment Study – 2 of 2**

“Earlier research demonstrated the need for a larger study of longer duration that also evaluates functional and health status outcomes, which is purpose of our study,” Wu said.



**Dr. Wen-Chih “Hank” Wu, acting chief of Medicine Service for the VA Providence Healthcare System, and professor of medicine and of epidemiology at Brown University, is lead researcher for a five-year, \$2.2 million study researching the use of probenecid as an outpatient treatment for heart failure with reduced ejection fraction. (VA Providence HCS photo by Kimberly DiDonato)**